



# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Houston Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership Celebration!** *Helping Houstonians Find and Care for Nature in Their Backyard*

Today the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) will be joined by a diversity of organizations and agencies to officially launch the Houston Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership (Houston Urban) at [Clinton Park](#). This innovative and creative partnership of more than 20 partners helps Houstonians learn about, find, and care for nature in their community. The dedication ceremony will include a short presentation by federal officials and elected leaders followed by activities and programs highlighting the partnership's successes.

"This broad partnership is key to connecting urban youth in the Houston area with nature," stated Jim Kurth, Deputy Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "With 80 percent of Americans living in cities, working with urban communities is our greatest opportunity to inspire a new generation to love and appreciate our treasured wild places."

Youth from HPARD's After-school Enrichment program and the Furr High School Green Ambassadors will lead the dedication and celebration of the Houston Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership. This family-friendly public event is open to all ages. Participants will plant the first native grasses and wildflowers to help establish a native seed bank and demonstration pollinator garden. Then the fun really begins with a host of activities, including pollinator games, a virtual science field trip, a 'wildlife' dance and much more. The event will highlight work done by partners to encourage families to get outdoors to enjoy nature wherever they might find it, including their own back yard, an urban park, or at a national wildlife refuge.

"We are pleased to join the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and partner with Houston Urban in its mission to connect young people to nature," said Joe Turner, Director Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "By providing that connection we are working to preserve these greenspaces, parks and natural areas for the future through conservation."

Since its establishment in 2013, Houston Urban and its partners have supported 28 organizations with habitat restoration and/or environmental education programs. This includes

projects at HPARD community centers, city and state parks, and national wildlife refuges. The partnership has reached more than 1,190 youth through both formal and informal environmental education programs.

“When Houston Urban was created, we realized from the start that we weren’t going to have to ‘create’ anything in Houston,” said Kurth. “Our partners are already doing innovative and important wildlife conservation work and our goal is to help them do more of it. We are extremely proud to be a part of this important partnership.”

The event begins at 4:00pm. Clinton Park is located at 200 Mississippi, Houston, Texas 77029. To learn more about this and other urban efforts, visit [www.fws.gov/urban](http://www.fws.gov/urban)

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*For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov). Connect with our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/usfws](http://www.facebook.com/usfws), follow our tweets at [www.twitter.com/usfwshq](http://www.twitter.com/usfwshq), watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.*

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